

**Snohomish County Planning and Development Services  
Docket XVII Initial Review and Evaluation of Docketing  
Proposal to the GMA Comprehensive Plan  
(~~March 29, 2013~~)  
Revised April 16, 2013**

**Applicant:** City of Stanwood

**File:** STAN5

12-109674-DA

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL**

**GPP FLUM designations  
and Urban Growth Area  
(UGA) adjustments:**

Proposed removal 1a: Remove 95 acres from the Stanwood UGA and redesignate from Urban Low Density Residential (ULDR) to Local Commercial Farmland (LCF)

Proposed removal 1b: Remove 21 acres from the Stanwood UGA and redesignate from ULDR to Rural Residential-5 (RR-5)

Proposed removal 2: Remove 26 acres from the Stanwood UGA and redesignate from Urban Industrial (UI) to Riverway Commercial Farmland (RCF)

Proposed addition 1: Add 63 acres to the Stanwood UGA and redesignate from RR-5 and Rural Urban Transition Area (RUTA) to ULDR

Proposed addition 2: Add 70 acres to the Stanwood UGA and redesignate from RR-5 and RUTA to ULDR

**Zoning:**

Proposed removal 1a: Rezone 95 acres from R-7,200 to (~~(R-5))~~ A-10

Proposed removal 1b: Rezone 21 acres from R-7,200 to R-5

Proposed removal 2: Rezone 26 acres from Rural Conservation (RC) to A-10

Proposed addition 1: Rezone 63 acres from R-5 to R-9,600

Proposed addition 2: Rezone 70 acres from R-5 to R-9,600

**Acres:**

UGA Removal 1a – 95 acres  
UGA Removal 1b – 21 acres  
UGA Removal 2 – 26 acres  
Total: - 142 acres

UGA Addition 1 - 63 acres  
UGA Addition 2 – 70 acres  
Total: - 133 acres

**SITE RELATED INFORMATION****Location:**

UGA removal 1a/1b - North of 288<sup>th</sup> St. NW (Larson Rd.), south of 300<sup>th</sup> St. NW, west of 88<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW (Skrinde Rd.), and east of Pioneer Hwy

UGA removal 2 - North of the Stillaguamish River, south of SR 532, and west of Stanwood city limits

UGA addition 1 - North of 281<sup>st</sup> St. (Jensen Rd), and east of 68<sup>th</sup> Ave NW (Cedarhome Rd.)

UGA addition 2 - North of Pioneer Hwy., south of SR 532, west of 64<sup>th</sup> Ave NW (Woodland Rd.), and east of Stanwood city limits

**Existing Land Use:**

UGA removal 1a/1b - Rural residences

UGA removal 2 - Agricultural operation

UGA addition 1 - Rural residences

UGA addition 2 - Rural residences and Stanwood – Camano Fairgrounds

**Adjacent Land Use:**

UGA removal 1a/1b – Large lot rural residences to the north, west and east; small lot rural residences to the south

UGA removal 2 – Agricultural lands to the north, west and south; mini-storage in the city to the east

- UGA addition 1 - Rural residences to the north and east; urban residential development to the west and south within the city
- UGA addition 2 - Rural residences to the east and south; school and large lot single family residential to the west within the city; vacant land and single family residence to the north

**Site Characteristics:**

- UGA removal 1a/1b - Mix of woodlands and fields
- UGA removal 2 - Historically cultivated fields within floodplain

- UGA addition 1 - Primarily fields with wooded swale along east border
- UGA addition 2 - Mix of woodlands and fields; Church Creek and tributary located in north portion of site

**Infrastructure:**

The residences within both the UGA removal areas and the UGA addition areas are served by on-site sewage disposal systems. According to the city, it would be difficult and costly to serve UGA removal areas 1a/1b and 2 with city sewer and water. The UGA addition areas 1 and 2 can more easily and cost effectively be served with city sewer and water. Both public sewer and water services are available adjacent to UGA addition area 1. Public water is currently provided to UGA addition area 2 and public sewer can be provided along Pioneer Highway.

The proposed UGA removals and re-designations to lower intensity agricultural resource and rural residential designations would likely generate significantly less traffic than the existing plan urban plan designations for these sites.

The proposed UGA additions have adequate connectivity with the system of arterial roadways serving the Stanwood area. Both of the proposed UGA additions would impact the intersection of SR 532 and 64<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW, which is not signalized. The existing road infrastructure, particularly the identified intersection, may not be adequate to serve the future development within these sites. The proposed UGA additions would likely generate significantly more traffic than the existing RR designations. A traffic study would be required for the proposed UGA additions.

The proposed UGA removals and re-designations to lower intensity agricultural resource and rural residential designations would likely generate significantly less traffic than the existing plan urban plan designations for these sites.

**Critical Areas:**

UGA removal 1a/1b - Stream located in northern portion of 1a site

UGA removal 2 - Entire site is within the density fringe of the Stillaguamish River floodplain

UGA addition 1 - Forested wetland along east border of site

UGA addition 2 - Church creek and tributary within the north portion of site

**EVALUATION**

PDS shall conduct an initial review and evaluation of proposed amendments and assess the extent of review that would be required under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). PDS shall recommend to the county council that an amendment be further processed only if all of the following criteria are met, except as provided in SCC 30.74.040.

**Initial Review and Evaluation Criteria (SCC 30.74.030(1)):**

**Criterion “a”: The proposed amendment is consistent with the countywide planning policies (CPPs), the multicounty planning policies (MPPs), the Growth Management Act (GMA), and other applicable state and federal laws.**

Yes. The proposed adjustment of the UGA boundaries by the city of Stanwood is consistent with the GMA, the MPPs, and the CPPs.

**GMA**

The proposal is consistent with the UGA requirements in RCW 36.70A.110(3):

*(3) Urban growth should be located first in areas already characterized by urban growth that have adequate existing public facility and service capacities to serve such development, second in areas already characterized by urban growth that will be served adequately by a combination of both existing public facilities and services and any additional needed public facilities and services that are provided by either public or private sources, and third in the remaining portions of the urban growth areas. Urban growth may also be located in designated new fully contained communities as defined by RCW 36.70A.350.*

Stanwood is proposing the adjustments to its UGA boundaries in order to provide cost effective infrastructure service, particularly sewer and water, within its UGA. The city cannot provide adequate sewer and water utility service to the two proposed UGA removal areas. The three removal areas are difficult to serve due to access and topographic constraints. The parcels proposed for addition to the UGA, either have

existing adjacent water and sewer service (Addition 1), or public water service is already provided and sewer lines can be easily extended (Addition 2).

#### MPPs

The proposal is consistent with MPP DP-1:

*Provide a regional framework for the designation and adjustment of the urban growth area to ensure long-term stability and sustainability of the urban growth area consistent with the regional vision.*

The proposed adjustment to the Stanwood UGA is consistent with the *Regional Growth Strategy* in *Vision 2040* which allows for minor adjustments to UGAs in order to plan for more efficient land uses and infrastructure to better accommodate population and employment growth within a UGA.

#### CPPs

The proposal is consistent with CPP DP-3:

*Following consultation with the affected city or cities, the County may adjust urban growth areas – defined in this policy as concurrent actions to expand an Urban Growth Area (UGA) in one location while contracting the same UGA in another location – without resulting in net increase of population or employment land capacity. Such action may be permitted when consistent with adopted policies and the following conditions:*

- a. The area being removed from the UGA is not already characterized by urban development, and without active permits that would change it to being urban in character; and*
- b. The land use designation(s) assigned in the area removed from the UGA shall be among the existing rural or resource designations in the comprehensive plan for Snohomish County.*

Stanwood's proposed UGA adjustments will not result in a net increase of population land capacity. For proposed UGA removal areas 1a and 1b, there would be a population reduction of 589. The two proposed addition areas would add a total population of 551. This adjustment would result in a net decrease in population land capacity. The residential densities used in the land capacity analysis were derived from Snohomish County Tomorrow's draft 2012 Buildable Lands Report.

The city does not propose to add employment capacity to the UGA to accommodate the 248 estimated jobs that were calculated for the UI designated land that is proposed for removal from the UGA (Removal 2).

The city's proposal is consistent with conditions "a" and "b" for adjusting UGAs under CPP DP-3. The three proposed removal areas are not characterized by urban development, do not have active permits for urban development, and are not served by urban infrastructure, including sanitary sewers. The RR-5, RCF, and LCF land use designations assigned to the areas proposed for removal from the UGA are existing rural and resource designations in the GPP.

PDS reviewed the land capacity information provided by the city for the proposed UGA adjustments using county parcel, critical areas, public use, and market reduction factors, and future land use designations (for the UGA removal areas) and city assumed densities (for the UGA expansion areas), and have determined that the city's proposed capacity neutral land use concept is accurate. The residential densities used in the city's land capacity analysis were derived from Snohomish County Tomorrow's draft 2012 Buildable Lands Report.

**Criterion "b": Any proposed change in the designation of agricultural lands, forest lands, and mineral resource lands is consistent with the designation criteria of the GMA and the comprehensive plan.**

Yes. The proposal includes the expansion of designated agricultural lands and is consistent with the agricultural designation criteria of the GMA and the county comprehensive plan. As a result of the proposed UGA removals, 95 acres (UGA Removal 1a) would be re-designated to LCF and rezoned to ((R-5)) A-10 and 26 acres (UGA Removal 2) would be re-designated to RCF and rezoned to A-10.

~~((The rezoning of Removal 1a to R-5 is consistent with the R-5 zoning of surrounding LCF parcels. There are, in fact, no LCF designated lands in the county that are zoned A-10 as the General Policy Plan (GPP) does not list any implementing zones for LCF. However, GPP LU Policy 7.B.1 provides the minimum lot area requirements for LCF;))~~

~~((Areas designated Local Commercial Farmland and not zoned Agriculture-10 shall not be divided into lots of less than 10 acres except when used exclusively for agricultural purposes.))~~

The minimum GMA guidelines, developed by Commerce, are found at WAC 365-190-050(3) and provide specific rules that must be considered before amending an agricultural resource lands designation.

*(3) Lands should be considered for designation as agricultural resource lands based on three factors:*

*(a) The land is not already characterized by urban growth . . .*

*(b) The land is used or capable of being used for agricultural production . . .*

*(i) Lands that are currently used for agricultural production and lands that are capable of such use must be evaluated for designation. The intent of a landowner to use land for agriculture or to cease such use is not the controlling factor in determining if land is used or capable of being used for agricultural production . . .*

*(ii) In determining whether lands are used or capable of being used for agricultural production, counties and cities shall use the land-capability classification system of the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service as defined in relevant Field Office Technical Guides. These eight classes are incorporated by the United States Department of Agriculture into map units described in published soil surveys, and are based on the growing capacity, productivity and soil composition of the land.*

*(c) The land has long-term commercial significance for agriculture. In determining this factor, counties and cities should consider the following nonexclusive criteria, as applicable:*

- (i) The classification of prime and unique farmland soils as mapped by the Natural Resources Conservation Service;*
- (ii) The availability of public facilities, including roads used in transporting agricultural products;*
- (iii) Tax status, including whether lands are enrolled under the current use tax assessment . . . and whether there is the ability to purchase or transfer land development rights;*
- (iv) The availability of public services;*
- (v) Relationship or proximity to urban growth areas;*
- (vi) Predominant parcel size;*
- (vii) Land use settlement patterns and their compatibility with agricultural practices;*
- (viii) Intensity of nearby land uses;*
- (ix) History of land development permits issued nearby;*
- (x) Land values under alternative uses; and*
- (xi) Proximity to markets.*

- (i) Prime farmland soils: The two sites (Removal 1a and Removal 2) proposed for re-designation to agricultural resource lands contain prime farmland soils as identified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Removal 1a contains Pastik silt loams and Removal 2 contains Puget silty clay loams.
- (ii) Availability of public facilities: The two sites are served by a network of rural roads that access the nearby city of Stanwood. Removal 1a is adjacent to Pioneer Highway NW which is a major collector and Removal 2 is adjacent to SR 532 which is a principal arterial. This road network can support the transporting of agricultural products from the sites to urban markets consistent with the intent of this criterion. It is also the intent of this criterion to identify whether certain public facilities are readily available to support a more intensive land use on the site. Sanitary sewer services are considered urban facilities and are generally not available outside of a UGA. The removal of these two sites from the Stanwood UGA will preclude future availability of sanitary sewer service by the city.
- (iii) Tax status: The majority of parcels within the Removal 1a site are enrolled in the county's current use tax assessment program as Open Space General. Only one of the parcels within Removal 1a site is enrolled as Open Space Agriculture. The majority of the parcels in the Removal 2 site are enrolled as Open Space Agriculture. Although enrollment in this tax program is a criterion that demonstrates a commitment to farming, participation in the program is voluntary.
- (iv) Availability of public services: Public services that are available to both sites include fire protection and emergency aid provided by the North County Regional Fire Authority and law enforcement provided by the Snohomish County Sheriff. The availability of these public services to the proposal sites is not limited by the proposed agricultural resource designation. No greater intensity of development would occur as a result of the availability of these public services to the site.
- (v) Proximity to UGAs: The proposal sites are adjacent to the Stanwood UGA.
- (vi) Predominant parcel size: Six out of ten parcels within Removal 1a are nine acres or larger in size. The average parcel size is 9.49 acres. Removal 2

- contains four parcels and 26 total acres. Two of the four parcels within Removal 2 are recorded as part of two larger parcels of over 30 acres each that extend north of the site and which are in active agricultural use. The predominant parcel size would not significantly impair the long term commercial viability of the two UGA removal areas for agricultural use.
- (vii) Land use settlement patterns: There is no evidence that the existing land use settlement patterns within the proposed sites would be incompatible with long term commercial viability for agricultural use. Only three of ten parcels in Removal 1a contain a single family residence. Only one of four parcels in Removal 2 contains a single family residence.
  - (viii) Intensity of nearby land uses: The majority of the land surrounding the two sites is designated farmland on the GPP Future Land Use (FLU) map and subsequently has a lower intensity of land use and is compatible with the proposed agricultural resource designations. Removal 1a is adjacent to Removal 1b, which would be redesignated from ULDR to RR-5. The RR-5 designation would result in greater compatibility with the proposed LCF designation than the current ULDR designation. Both sites only narrowly adjoin the Stanwood UGA.
  - (ix) History of land development permits issued nearby: There is no significant history of land development permits being issued in the unincorporated area surrounding the two sites. In the last eighteen years, only two parcels near the Removal 1a site were issued building permits (single family dwellings). One building permit was issued for a farm stand in 2011 near Removal 2 site.
  - (x) Land values under alternative uses: The proposed redesignations of the two sites to agricultural land use could result in lower land values than under the current ULDR and UI land use designations. However, both sites have development constraints which have likely kept current development potential to a minimum. Removal 1a cannot be cost effectively served by city sanitary sewer. Removal 2 is located in the 100 year floodplain of the Stillaguamish River which limits urban development potential.
  - (xi) Proximity to markets: The proposal sites are adjacent to the Stanwood UGA and have good road access to transport agricultural products to this market for purchase by distributors or for direct sale at farmers markets. This proximity to markets favors the proposed agricultural designations.

The county comprehensive plan farmland designation criteria are located in GPP LU Policy 7.A.3:

*7.A.3 The county shall designate farmland as required by the GMA, and consider the guidance provided for designating agricultural lands of long term commercial significance adopted by the State. In addition, farmland designations and expansions of such designations on contiguous lands should be made considering all of the following criteria:*

- (a) The land is prime farmland as defined by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS) or consists of other Class III soils in the SCS's capability classification;*
- (b) The land is shown to be devoted to agriculture by:*
  - 1. the adopted future land use map;*
  - 2. a current zoning classification of Agriculture-10 acre; and*



3. *was identified in the 1982 agriculture land inventory, the 1990 aerial photo interpretation, or the 1991 field identification of land devoted to agriculture;*
- (c) *The land is located outside a UGA;*
- (d) *The land is located outside a sewer service boundary; and*
- (e) *The land consists of a parcel of 10 acres or greater in areas designated as Upland Commercial Farmland or Local Commercial Farmland.*

The two proposal sites (Removal 1a and Removal 2) meet the criteria in GPP LU Policy 7.A.3 for redesignation to LCF and RCF. The proposal sites meet the criteria for designation as agricultural land of long-term commercial significance as follows:

- (a) Prime farmland soils: The two sites proposed for re-designation to agricultural resource lands contain prime farmland soils as identified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Removal 1a contains Pastik silt loams and Removal 2 contains Puget silty clay loams.
- (b) Devoted to agriculture: The two sites are devoted to agriculture based on identification in the 1982 agriculture land inventory, the 1990 aerial photo interpretation and the 1991 field identification of land devoted to agriculture. The aerial photos identified areas in active farm operations and those that were idle but included fields, pastures, fences and other factors which indicated past farming activities.
- (c) Located outside a UGA: The sites are proposed to be removed from the Stanwood UGA.
- (d) Located outside a sewer service area: The sites are proposed to be removed from the Stanwood sewer service area.
- (e) Designated Local or Upland Commercial Farmland: The Removal 1a site, which is a proposed redesignation to LCF, contains three parcels that are 10 acres or larger in area. This criterion does not apply to the Removal 2 site which is proposed for re-designation to RCF.

**Criterion “c”: If the proposed amendment has been reviewed by the planning commission or county council as part of a previous proposal, circumstances related to the current proposal have significantly changed and support a plan or regulation change at this time.**

Yes. The proposed amendments include a proposal that has previously been reviewed by the planning commission and the county council. However, circumstances related to the current proposal have significantly changed to support the current inclusion of the previous proposal.

A proposal by Tom and Karie Tarte to expand the Stanwood UGA to include their 9.7 acre parcel as ULDR was submitted in 2007. An initial evaluation was completed by PDS and it was determined that the Tarte proposal was not consistent with all of the initial docket review criteria. The proposal was inconsistent with the CPP for expansion of an individual UGA since the percent of additional population capacity used in the UGA since the start of the planning period in 2005 had not equaled or exceeded 50%. In 2008, the county council, by Amended Motion No. 08-238, did not place the Tarte proposal on the final docket for further processing.

Since that action, the CPPs were revised in 2011 and now include CPP DP-3 which allows the county to consider adjustments of UGAs without resulting in a net increase of population or employment land capacity. The Tartes' 9.7 acre parcel is included in Addition 1 as part of the Stanwood application to adjust its UGA according to the requirements in CPP DP-3.

**Criterion "d": If the next docket cycle to be set is limited to minor amendments by SCC 30.74.015(2)(a), the proposal satisfies all of the following conditions:**

N/A. This criterion is not applicable to the proposal since Docket XVII, the next docket cycle to be set, is scheduled for processing of both major and minor amendments according to SCC 30.74.015(2)(c).

#### **Initial Review of Rezone Requests (SCC 30.74.040):**

**(1) The rezone request is for an implementing zone consistent with a concurrent proposed amendment to the future land use map that meets the criteria of SCC 30.74.030.**

Yes. Since the rezone requests are for implementing zones consistent with the concurrent proposed future land use map amendments that meet the criteria of SCC 30.74.030, the proposed rezones are consistent with this criterion.

**(2) Public facilities and services necessary for development of the site, as defined in applicable capital facilities plans, are available or programmed to be provided consistent with the comprehensive plan and development regulations as determined by applicable service providers.**

Yes. Public facilities and services, including sewer and water, are available to proposed UGA Additions 2 and 3 and would be provided by the city of Stanwood.

**(3) Site plan approval would not be required concurrent with the rezone under chapters 30.31A, 30.31B, or 30.31F SCC.**

Yes. A site plan approval would not be required concurrent with the rezone under chapters 30.31A, 30.31B, or 30.31F SCC.

#### **Summary of Consistency with Review Criteria**

Consistent with Initial Docket Review Criteria: SCC 30.74.030(1)				Consistent with Rezone Criteria: SCC 30.74.040		
"a"	"b"	"c"	"d"	"1"	"2"	"3"
Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	Y	Y

#### **Recommendation:**

According to SCC 30.74.030 and 30.74.040, PDS is required to recommend to the county council that proposed docket amendments be further processed only if all of the initial review and evaluation criteria are met. The city of Stanwood docket proposal **does** meet all of the initial review and evaluation criteria; therefore, PDS recommends that the proposal be further processed.